

Our itinerary suggestions to you during your stay at the Gîte Colibri du Recoux.

Fly into Toulouse or Bordeaux and rent a car from there. This is truly the best way to get to the gîte and surrounding region. Unless you are flying regionally: there are inexpensive flights into Bergerac on RyanAir which are even closer to the gîte and car rental even less expensive than from major airports Toulouse or Bordeaux. Try to arrive at the gîte with a few food items as some stores are closed on the weekends.

Day 1—Saturday: “Arrive, explore, relax, enjoy local cuisine”

- Arrive at the Gîte Colibri Recoux in the afternoon
- Rest, walk around, unpack and perhaps catch a nap
- 6 or 7pm—drive 5km to Audrix for dinner at the marche nocturne. This is a must see! Bring your own plates, napkins, cups, silverware in your own bag; or purchase at the entrance. This is a famous night market where all the local food artisans bring their specialties to sell. It is not expensive and is the best food you can buy on your entire vacation. It is not overcrowded and usually results in a few really nice conversations as you share tables with others joining the event. Sometimes there is a little music and the views from the town are spectacular.

Day 2—Sunday: “Prehistoric tour of nearby sites”

- Wake leisurely (or wake early and go for a run or drive into Coux for a baguette and bring it back for your loved one)
- Depart for the Saint Cyprien Market (bring your own shopping bag)— if you opted out of sleeping in, arriving early (around 7-8am) will ensure you have the place to yourselves and will beat the crowds. Later is fine, too (even up until noon), but there are more people. Buy bread, cheese, meat, vegetables and fruit for a picnic; stroll the ancient streets of St. Cyp for 30 min or so.
- Set out from St Cyp through the town of Meyrals to explore the prehistoric sites around Les Eyzies and Montignac. The most famous: Lascaux II in Montignac: <http://www.semitour.com/site-touristique/lascaux-ii>, for Lascaux II, you must book your tickets in advance at the tourist information office in Montignac. They have tours in different languages so they will allocate you to the next tour that is in English. Lascaux II is a short drive from Montignac. The Rocque St Christophe is quite near Montignac so could be done on the same day (Le Roc is a staged cliff-dwelling outdoor museum that is good for kids and adults alike. There are two very pretty villages nearby: St Leon sur Vézère and St Amand de Coly. St Leon sur Vézère is by the river and there are picnic tables available if you to picked up some bread, cheese, wine, pastries and a bottle of wine from the market in St. Cyp. Or, La Poste Restaurant in the village of St Leon serves reasonable food.
- If time allows, you could drive back through Sarlat on the way back to the gîte.
- Dinner out, or at the gîte (see restaurant recommendations below)

Day 3—Monday: “Full-day trip #1 from Gîte Colibri”

- Get up early and take a full-day trip to Rocamadour and Padirac:
- **Gouffre de Padirac (Lot)—arrive by 10am (book in advance!)** The Gouffre de Padirac is the favourite pre-historic cave in the Dordogne area. The cave is entered by boat. A great one for the kids. It is strongly recommended to purchase tickets several weeks or month prior to your visit, or to arrive before 10am or after 3pm. <http://www.gouffre-de-padirac.com/#/en>; It is located only 30 min from Rocamadour (Lot) --one of the key sites of France, and one of the “most beautiful villages” of France
- Lunch in the center of the precariously perched village of Rocamadour in any restaurant with a view
- **Grotte des Merveilles at Rocamadour**
This cave contains both prehistoric drawings and stalactites and stalagmites.
- Dinner: back home at the gîte or try Hotel Trefle in Siorac en Perigord. The food is wonderful.

Day 4—Tuesday: “Towns and sites nearby”

- Stop for coffee and croissants in Coux et Bigaroque. Drive through town of Bigaroque, along the Dordogne, and into Le Bugue. The Market in Le Bugue is Tuesday morning. Pick up some bread, cheese, wine, pastries and a bottle of wine from the market in Le Bugue. Drive back through Le Bussion et Cadouin, Urval, through Beynac toward Cenac.

- Tackle #1-3 on the list below, “**Attractions within 30min**” (1. Domme, 2. Jardins Marqueyssac, 3. La Roque Gageac, -- The Jardins Marqueyssac is where you can eat your picnic lunch. Do Domme first, then the Jardins, then La Roque on the way home).
- L’Esplande is a famous restaurant in Domme and good for a romantic dinner if you return or are planning your itinerary in reverse. The views are amazing.

Day 5—Wednesday: “Sarlat-la-Canada and a day on the river”

- **Sarlat:** See the smaller Wednesday market in Sarlat (the Saturday market is the main market, but it is absolutely gi-normous and difficult to see/do/breathe/park. Wednesday is more relaxed. Get there in the early morning, no later than 9...then:
- **Canoe trip Vitrac to Beynac** or Cenac to Beynac: canoe trip is better in the morning when the sun will be at your back & not in your face. Also note that kayak/canoe trips usually take longer than you think. My arms are very tired after 30 minutes or so. Vitrac to Beynac is much more recommended for this reason. Itineraries for short, long, or, more strenuous routes see: [Canoes Loisirs](#).
- Another kayak option is: you can also drive to Les Eyzies and hire a kayak on the river Vezere. This is a scenic river with more cliff-side pre-historic views and nature, distinct from the Dordogne river views of chateaux and perched towns. For river enthusiasts, you should really do both: kayak the Dordogne one day and the Vezere another day. Notice the color of the two rivers are different due to the terrain around their sources. The Vezere is more red, flowing from red-clay areas around Brive, and the Dordogne more blue/clear, flowing from Burgundy.
- **Dinner:** go to the beautiful town of **Belves for the marche nocturne**.

Day 6—Thursday: “Full-day trip #2 from Gîte Colibri”

- Visit the Lot region: Cahors, Pech-Merle, and the historic town St. Cirq la Popie—another one of the “most beautiful villages” of France.
- Dinner: see options below, or find something on the road home from the Lot region—perhaps Monpazier which is on your way home and a famous Bastide town to visit.

Day 7—Friday: “Walking tour of Sarlat and visit to Beynac and/or Castelnaud chateau”

- Be sure to take some time to walk around the town of Sarlat on a day that is NOT a market day (Saturday and Wednesdays are market days). Shop, take the little tourist train, or get a walking tour. Stop at an eatery for lunch and enjoy the architecture.
- Plan to walk any number of grande randonne trails around the region
- Go to the beach in Coux-et-Bigaroque and relax on the river OR enjoy a sandy beach and Montfort.
- Take some time to explore any number of additional chateaux or caves/grottos on the list below. These are really a specialty of the region.

Day 8—Saturday: “Departure”

- Check out time is noon. Please leave the gîte as clean as you have found it, OR you have the option of paying for a cleaning service, which is 50 euros (and well worth it 😊).

Restaurant recommendations :

1. La Belle Etoile in La Roque Gageac
2. Hotel du Chateau in Beynac
3. Roseraei hotel in Montignac (reasonable price)
4. Pont de l'Ouyse between Souillac and Martel
5. L'Auberge Médiévale in Audrix—nice young chef, close to gite; traditional garden setting
6. Manoir de Bellerive in Le Buisson et Cadouin (expensive—lovely grounds)
7. Manoir-hautegente in Sarlat (expensive but gorgeous--<http://www.manoir-hautegente.com/uk/index.php#le-restaurant-gastronomique.php>)
8. L’Esplande is a famous restaurant in Domme
9. Hotel Trefle in Siorac en Perigord—easy, close to gite, great food, relaxing (medium price)

Other recommended things to do:

- Horseback ride Les Eyzies—I can strongly recommend Le Ferme Fonlac. There is a plan here for every skill, but if are skilled enough to both trot and run on a horse, push yourself to do the full-day ride with picnic. It takes you throughout the prehistoric region with a guide who can give you tutorials along the way. The scenery is breathtaking. I consider myself a good rider, but I was very tired and sore at the end of the day. This was a fascinating and exciting experience—one of those “top ten must DO events in life” ...if riding is your thing.
- More caves:
The cave castle at Forte Reignac (<http://www.maison-forte-reignac.com/>) is in the same area as La Rocque St Christophe and Montignac, and is worth visiting. (It only opened to the public for the first time a couple of years ago: <http://maison-forte-reignac.com>.
Gouffre de Proumeyssac cave (8min): <http://gouffre-proumeyssac.com/>
Grotte de Sorcier (10 min): <http://www.grottedusorcier.com/>
Grottes de Maxange (20 min) (24480 Le Buisson de Cadouin)
All caves in the region are listed on these sites:
<http://www.guide-du-perigord.com/tourisme/caves-119-en.html>
<http://www.everythingdordogne.net/Caves.html>

Attractions within 30 min of gite Colibri :

1. **Domme:** The entire town is gorgeous and there are many things to see and do in Domme, the Town Hall, the 15th-century Governors house and the Paul Reclus museum, the 17th-century covered market takes pride of place in Halle de Domme. In the centre of the market is the entrance to the magnificent Domme caves, formerly used as a hiding place by the towns people. This grotte is the largest natural cave in the Périgord Noir, featuring colonnades, stalactites and stalagmites. Just above the Place de la Halle is the Belvedere de la Barre, a great viewpoint and the start of the Promenade des Falaises - a short walk leading to a public park. The walk is all high up above the Dordogne river and so the views are stunning. Parts of the walk are bordered by remains of the fortified walls that surrounded parts of Domme. The Jardin Public at the end is a **good place for a picnic**. A little further along is the Moulin du Roy.
2. **Jardins Marqueyssac**—give yourself 1.5 hours to walk around these 22-acres of amazing gardens. Bring a picnic or eat at the café du the or glacier. Good for kids, too.
3. **La Roque Gageac:** one of the most famous towns of the Dordogne region, and one of the “most beautiful villages”. Walk around on foot, eat lunch overlooking the river, and see the Troglodyte Fort and cliffside dwellings, dating from the 12th century, found 40 meters up the cliffs. Also, sightseeing Gabarres (boats) leave from the docks in front of the carpark, tickets can be purchased from the kiosk nearby. This is a great way to get time on the river to see some famous chateaux and learn some history.
4. **Canoe trip Vitrac to Beynac** or Cenac to Beynac: canoe trip is better in the morning when the sun will be at your back & not in your face. Also note that kayak/canoe trips usually take longer than you think. My arms are very tired after 30 minutes or so. Vitrac to Beynac is much more recommended for this reason. For other itineraries for longer, more strenuous routes see: [Canoes Loisirs](#).
5. **Belves**— one of France's most beautiful villages
 - a. Troglodyte houses at Belves—Underneath the main square of Belves there is a pre-historic troglodyte village in grottes (caves) which is very interesting to visit.
 - b. Marche nocturne in Belves—Wednesday nights starting 6pm. Bring your own plates, napkins, utensils and cups. Don't miss this!
6. **Les Eyzies** — important prehistoric town with lots of cliffs surrounding the area, museums, and many large and small caves and grottos. Check the tourist office for details.
 - i. **Horseback ride Les Eyzies**—I can strongly recommend **Le Ferme Fonlac**. There is a plan here for every skill, but if are skilled enough to both trot and run on a horse, push yourself to do the full-day ride with picnic. It takes you throughout the prehistoric region with a guide who can give you tutorials along the way. The scenery is breathtaking. I consider myself a good rider, but I was very tired and sore at the end of the day. This was a fascinating and exciting experience—one of those “top ten must DO events in life” ...if riding is your thing.

- ii. **National Pre-History Museum**—museum of pre-history is an excellent way to learn about the prehistoric area of the Dordogne.
- iii. Take one of the several marked **randonne (hiking) trails** that start from Les Eyzies and meander through the valley. Pick up a randonne map from the tourist office. These trails are literally all over the region, so pick a town and set off—if hiking is your thing! This is one of the better sceneries for these hikes.

Markets:

<http://www.everythingdordogne.net/Markets.php>

Monday Markets in the Dordogne

Lacapelle Biron: evenings - general market
Les Eyzies de Tayac: mornings - general market
Sainte Alvère: mornings - general market
Sainte Alvère: 15 June to 15 September - market sells local produce
Sainte Alvère: December to February - Truffle market
Tocane St Apre: morning market in the centre of town - general goods and food

Tuesday Markets in the Dordogne

Brantôme: mid June to mid September mornings - fresh farm produce
Castillonès: mornings - general market
Eymet: evening market during July and August
Le Bugue-sur-Vézère: mornings - fresh regional produce
Mareuil-sur-Belle: mornings - fresh food
Ribérac: May to September morning market at Place de la Liberté - fresh farm produce
Saint-Amand-de-Coly: July and August evenings from 18:00 - local farm produce
Saint-Aulaye Dordogne: last Tuesday of the month - fair

Wednesday Markets in the Dordogne

Belvès: July and August evenings around the hall - local farm produce
Bergerac: mornings at Place du Marché Couvert - fruits and vegetables
Montignac: mornings - local produce, fruit and vegetables
Perigueux: mornings at Place du Coderc, Place de la Clautre, Place de la Mairie - fresh farm produce
Perigueux: all day market at Place Bugeaud and Place Francheville - arts and crafts and fabrics
Perigueux: mid November to mid March, mornings at Place St Louis - marché au gras (duck and goose produce) and truffles
Sarlat: mornings at Place de la Liberté and streets around - fresh regional produce

Thursday Markets in the Dordogne

Excideuil Dordogne: mornings - large general market
Eymet Dordogne: mornings - general market. This market has been running regularly since 1270.
Saint Astier Dordogne: mornings - general market held year round
Saint-Aulaye Dordogne: mornings - fish market
Terrasson Dordogne: mornings - marché au gras (duck and goose produce) and truffles

Friday Markets in the Dordogne

Brantôme: mornings - general market
Brantôme: July and August, farmer's market selling local specialities
Brantôme: December to February, mornings - truffle market
Brantôme: 1 November to 15 December - morning nut market
La Roque-Gageac: June to September 9:00 13:00 on the main square - local farm produce
Ribérac: mornings, throughout the city centre - general market. The biggest market of the Perigord
Ribérac: 15 November to 15 March, mornings in the Salle Polyvalente - marché au gras (duck and goose produce)
Ribérac: Autumn in Place André-Pradeau - morning nut market

Saturday Markets in the Dordogne

Belvès: mornings, around the hall - general market

Bergerac: mornings at the Place du Marché Couvert - fruits and vegetables

Le Bugue-sur-Vézère: mornings - fresh regional produce

Montignac: mornings - fresh produce smaller than the main Wednesday market.

Monpazier: Mornings - fresh produce

Mussidan: mornings - fresh farm produce

Nontron: 2nd Saturday of July, evening in Place Alfred Agard - African market

Perigueux: mid-November to mid-March, mornings at Place St Louis - marché au gras (duck and goose produce) and truffles

Perigueux: mornings at Place du Coderc, Place de la Clautre, Place de la Mairie - fresh farm produce

Riberac: 3rd Saturday of August, all day - antiques market

Sarlat: all day market in Place de la Grande Rigaudie and Place Boissarie - fresh regional produce (and in winter only marché au gras and truffles). A highlight of the markets in the Dordogne.

Saint-Aulaye: mornings - fresh farm produce

Villefranche-du-Perigord: September and October mornings in Place de Villefranche - chestnut market

Sunday Markets in the Dordogne

Eymet: occasional morning artist market

Issigeac: mornings - general market

Riberac: May to September, mornings at Place du Relais - fresh farm produce

Rouffignac St-Cernin de Reilhac: mornings - local produce, fish, fruit and vegetable, flowers, also clothes and a Chinese food stall

Saint-Cyprien: mornings in summer

Special Markets in the Dordogne

Audrix: July and August from 18:00 to 23:00 - local farm produce

Brantôme: July and August - fresh farm produce

Issigeac: 1st weekend of May - flower market

Mussidan: July and August, daily except Monday, under the hall - fresh farm produce

Riberac: July and August - arts and crafts evening markets

Rouffignac St-Cernin de Reilhac: Wednesday evenings from 18:00 from July to beginning August at Place du marché

Saint-Aulaye: 2nd weekend of August in the evening - wine, cheese and regional produce fair

Thiviers: 3rd weekend of August - wine and food fair

Villefranche-du-Perigord: in season, June to October - cepes (wild mushroom) market.

Note: Market days depend on there being enough mushrooms (500 kg). Call the Mairie to find out if the market is on: 05 53 29 91 44

Things you can do directly from the gîte:

- Take one of the several randonne trails that start at the gîte d'étape down the hill on the way to Coux. See maps and directions in the basket at the gîte.
- Drive 2km to the beach at Coux—it is lifeguarded (good for kids) but also a good beach for picnics and socializing. Look for the signs in Coux and drive the little dirt road toward the river till it is obvious where it is.

Chateaux and Castles to Visit in the Dordogne

The Dordogne Valley is often referred to as the 'Valley of the 5 Chateaux' or the 'Valley of the 5 Castles'. This is because there are five very historic chateaux or castles dating from the 100 years war. The two most impressive chateaux or castles are the famous Chateau Beynac and Chateau Castelnaud. These chateaux are reputed to be the most visited chateaux or castles in France.

The chateaux or castles that make up the five chateaux.

Le Chateau de Castelnaud, Castelnaud Dordogne.

The most visited chateau or castle in the South of France dominates the picturesque village of Castelnaud-la-Chapelle on the left bank of the Dordogne River. During the Middle-Ages, the mighty English chateau or castle commanded the strategic position at the meeting of the Dordogne and the Céou Rivers, opposite the rival French castle of Beynac. This castle is truly magnificent and transport one back i time.

Chateau de Beynac, Beynac Dordogne.

This impressive chateau or castle was destroyed and rebuilt many times. It includes features of many ages, including some rare frescoes of the 15th century. It played a significant role in the 100 years war when the castle was in French hands and battled the English across the river in their strong hold of Chateau Castelnaud.

Les Chateau Milandes, Dordogne

The castle was built in 1489 by François de Caumont, lord of Castelnaud at the request of his wife, Claude de Cardaillac who wished to live in a more comfortable castle than the feudal castle of Castelnaud. He retained various architectural elements from the Middle-Ages, including turrets, newel staircases, and gargoyles. From the Revolution throughout the entire 19th century, the castle was inhabited, though was barely maintained, before it suffered a serious fire. From 1900 to 1908, a rich industrialist, Charles de Claverie, considerably restored the castle.

Josephine Baker (1906-1975) purchased Les Milandes in 1947 and transformed the interior of the castle, adding all the contemporary comforts: central heating, running water and electricity. Baker's massive expenses led her into bankruptcy and the castle was sold in 1968 for a tenth of its value. The gardens of the chateau are beautiful and well worth a visit

Chateau Monfort, Dordogne This castle is privately owned and not open to the public

Chateau Fayac, Dordogne This castle is privately owned and not open to the public

Other Chateaux and Castles of Interest

Le Chateau de Commarque, Les Eyzies Dordogne

The castle was founded during the 12th century on the request of the abbots of Sarlat. At this time the Château de Commarque was only a wooden tower, and its primary concerns were to discourage the ambitions of the Beynac family and to insure the safety of the valley. It was placed at the crossing of two important commercial roads: the road from Périgueux to Cahors and the road from Brive-la-Gaillarde to Bergerac. During the Hundred Years' War, the castle was captured by the English who held the place for several years. Later during the French Wars of Religion, the castle was taken by the Catholics, due to the Beynacs being Protestant partisans. The castle has been undergoing restoration since 1994. It has been listed since 1943 as a monument historique by the French Ministry of Culture. There is a prehistoric cave under the castle.

Chateau Bourdeilles, Brantome Dordogne

The Chateau de Bourdeilles was designed by a woman, Jacquet Montbron. There are two parts to this chateau, a fortress dating from the 13th century, dominated by an octagonal living area and a Renaissance castle with richly furnished rooms such as the golden lounge with a beautiful painted ceiling. There is a prestigious collection of furniture including the bed of Spanish Charles V.

Chateau de Hautefort, Hautefort Dordogne.

40km east of Perigueux, Hautefort is one of the most prestigious castles in the Dordogne and indeed in the southwest of France, and is a historical monument. This elegant castle contains paintings and tapestries from the 17th century and is surrounded by formal French gardens and parkland.

Chateau de Fenelon, Sainte Mondane (between Sarlat and Souillac) Dordogne

It's a beautiful castle surrounded by a triple wall and located above the village of Saint Mondane. The roof is still covered with stone slate. Traditional roofing material but more and more scarce due to high costs involved today

by holding such roofs. The castle has a collection of armour, weapons and furniture dating back to 15, 16 17 and 18th centuries.

Chateau Biron Dordogne

The chateau Biron was privately owned by the same family for 24 generations when it was lost in the early 20th c to gambling debts of the then baron. Biron is my favourite chateau, it is smaller than many of the big defensive chateaux of the area and you can get a really good sense of what life was like in medieval times. This lovely castle is currently being painstakingly restored. Chateau Biron is close to the Bastide town of Monpazier.

Chateau de Jumilhac, Thiviers.

In the northeast corner of the Dordogne, is the magnificent Chateau de Jumilhac. The remarkable feature of this castle is the roof which is an stunning array of towers and turrets that led to Jumilhac being described as having the most romantic rooftops in France. Read more

Chateau de Montreal, Isaac

A nice little chateau and formal gardens.